

Remarks on the Nomination of Margaret Spellings To Be Secretary of Education

November 17, 2004

The President. Thank you all. Please be seated. Good morning. I'm proud to announce my nomination of Margaret Spellings to be the Secretary of Education.

I've known Margaret Spellings for more than a decade. I have relied on her intellect and judgment throughout my career in public service. As Governor of Texas, I called on her to serve the children of our State as my chief education adviser, a job she carried out with conviction and great results.

When I was elected President, I asked her to serve as Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy. I've benefited from her knowledge and experience on many issues, from health care to immigration to job training. I'm now calling on this energetic reformer to serve the children of America by continuing our vital work of improving our Nation's public schools.

Margaret Spellings has a special passion for this cause. She believes that every child can learn and that every school can succeed. And she knows the stakes are too high to tolerate failure. She believes in high standards and improving the resources necessary—and providing the resources necessary to meet those standards. In Margaret Spellings, America's children, teachers, and parents will have a principled, determined ally in my Cabinet. She has my complete trust, and she will be an outstanding Secretary of Education.

With the Senate's approval, Margaret Spellings will continue the work of a fine educator and leader, Secretary Rod Paige. As Secretary of Education, this humble and decent man inspired his Department and implemented the most significant Federal education reform in a generation. Today, thanks to the No Child Left Behind Act, students of every background are making hopeful progress in reading and math. The

Nation's schools are stronger because of Rod Paige's leadership. I'm grateful for his friendship. I'm grateful for his years of service.

We've made great progress in our schools, and there is more work to do. Margaret Spellings and I are determined to extend the high standards and accountability measures of the No Child Left Behind Act to all of America's public high schools. We must ensure that a high school diploma is a sign of real achievement, so that our young people have the tools to go to college and to fill the jobs of the 21st century. And in all our reforms, we will continue to stand behind our Nation's teachers, who work so hard for our children.

The issue of education is close to my heart. And on this vital issue, there is no one I trust more than Margaret Spellings. Two decades ago, as a young aide in the Texas State legislature, Margaret dedicated herself to strengthening public schools. She went on to help lead the Texas Association of School Boards, to advise two Governors on school reform, and to serve 4 years as my top domestic policy adviser right here in the White House. And now her talent and idealism have brought her to the highest education office in the land. Through it all, she has kept her good humor and her perspective on life. She is a devoted, loving mother to Mary and Grace, and Laura and I are proud to count her and Robert as good friends.

I urge the Senate to promptly confirm Margaret Spellings as America's eighth Secretary of Education. And I look forward to having her in my Cabinet.

Congratulations.

[*At this point, Secretary-designate Spellings made brief remarks.*]

The President. Good job.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:07 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. The transcript released by the Office of the

Press Secretary also included the remarks of Secretary-designate Spellings.

Message to the Congress Transmitting the Japan-United States Social Security Agreement
November 17, 2004

To the Congress of the United States:

Pursuant to section 233(e)(1) of the Social Security Act, as amended by the Social Security Amendments of 1977 (Public Law 95-216, 42 U.S.C. 433(e)(1)), I transmit herewith the Agreement between the United States of America and Japan on Social Security, which consists of two separate instruments: a principal agreement and an administrative arrangement. The Agreement was signed at Washington on February 19, 2004.

The United States-Japan Agreement is similar in objective to the social security agreements already in force with Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Chile, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Korea, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. Such bilateral agreements provide for limited coordination between the United States and foreign social security systems to eliminate dual social security coverage and taxation, and to help prevent the lost benefit protection that can occur when workers divide their careers between two countries. The United States-Japan Agreement contains all provisions mandated by section 233 and other provisions

which I deem appropriate to carry out the purposes of section 233, pursuant to section 233(c)(4).

I also transmit for the information of the Congress a report prepared by the Social Security Administration explaining the key points of the Agreement, along with a paragraph-by-paragraph explanation of the provisions of the principal agreement and the related administrative arrangement. Annexed to this report is the report required by section 233(e)(1) of the Social Security Act, a report on the effect of the Agreement on income and expenditures of the United States Social Security program and the number of individuals affected by the Agreement.

The Department of State and the Social Security Administration have recommended the Agreement and related documents to me.

I commend to the Congress the United States-Japan Social Security Agreement and related documents.

GEORGE W. BUSH

The White House,
November 17, 2004.